



PO Box 790
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83701-0790

(208) 332-8650
Fax (208) 334-2386

www.scc.state.id.us

Governor
Dirk Kempthorne

Commission members

Jerry Reid
Bill Whittom
J. Morgan Evans
Gary Grindstaff
Tom Johnston

Administrator
Jerry Nicolescu

APPROVED MINUTES
Idaho Soil Conservation Commission
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, Idaho

The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC) held its regular, bi-monthly meeting on September 13, 2004 in Lower Conference Rooms 1 and 2 at the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) office in Boise, Idaho. Attendance was as follows:

Members:	Bill Whittom, Chairman J. Morgan Evans, Vice-Chairman Gary Grindstaff, Secretary Jerry Reid, Member Tom Johnston, Member
Advisors:	Kyle Hawley, Idaho Association Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) Rich Sims, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Advisors not present:	Paul McCawley, University of Idaho (U of I)
Others:	Jerry Nicolescu, ISCC Brenda Thomasson, ISCC Jennifer Ambrose, ISCC Shonna Taylor, ISCC Biff Burleigh, ISCC Kathy Weaver, ISCC Kathie Shea, ISCC Tony Bennett, ISCC Pat McCoy, Capitol Press Lance Holloway, ISDA Wayne Newbill, IASCD Terry Cosby, NRCS Phil Bandy, DEQ Gary Bahr, ISDA

Welcome/Announcements

Chairman Whittom called the meeting to order at 8:33 A.M. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if any introductions were needed. As no guests were present, no introductions were necessary.

Minutes

Whittom asked if the minutes had been read. Everyone acknowledged that they had taken the opportunity to read them. Grindstaff moved to approve the July 12-13, 2004 minutes as submitted. Johnston seconded the motion and it carried.

Loan and Budget Updates

Nicolescu led a discussion on the FY 05 budget, loan software, ground water mitigation reimbursement and other updates. Evans asked about the new loan software. Thomasson distributed information about the potential software purchase and explained the funding options that we might be able to utilize. Johnston asked if some of the funding in the RCRDP administration fund might be used to help market the loan program and Nicolescu indicated that it might be. Nicolescu announced that a new loan officer has been hired. Her name is Christy Mastin and she will begin employment on October 10, 2004.

Financial Reports

General Fund Expenses

Thomasson delivered the general fund report. An updated financial report (current as of 09/09/04) was distributed. She reviewed current spending for each PCA. She noted we are doing very well overall. We have currently expended 17% of our available budget. Reid moved to approve the financial report. Evans seconded and the motion carried.

Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) Fiscal Report

Taylor presented the RCRDP fiscal report. She distributed an updated RCRDP financial report, current as of 09/10/04. Johnston asked if the program was growing; he noted his district has demonstrated increased interest. Reid inquired as to the nature of the "legal expenses" line item. Thomasson explained that the amount was in part administration/overhead costs paid to ISDA; the balance was actual attorney fees (Cosho, Greener, Humphrey, and Welsh) for loans in default. She noted that at times, ISDA fiscal will process bills without notifying the Commission of the amount posted. Reid moved to approve the RCRDP report. Evans seconded the motion. Evans noted it does not make sense, from a business perspective, to be working with a fiscal department that does not communicate. He expressed his concern for the difficulties that may be encountered in managing a budget from which expenditures are processed without our approval or notice. After some discussion, the motion passed.

There was some discussion on vehicles. Hawley asked if there was a policy used by other agencies regarding vehicles, safety, and replacement. Nicolescu indicated that he thought there probably was; however, he also pointed out that the Commission is one of the few agencies funded 100 percent by general fund dollars. Grindstaff asked if the Commission could initiate a plan to maintain our fleet by replacing a few at a time. Nicolescu and Thomasson reported that such a plan is already in place. Thomasson reminded everyone that our ability to purchase/replace vehicles is dependant upon legislature and stated that replacement vehicles had been requested for FY06.

Proposed RCRDP Loan Software Review

Taylor and Ambrose fielded questions regarding the proposed loan software, including security, customized data, customer support, and ITRMC approval. It is anticipated that once the software has been purchased, it will actually be another six months (approximately) before the new program can be fully implemented. There will be a process of cleaning up the old program's data, customizing the new software, and then migrating the old data to the new system.

RCRDP Loan Application(s) Reviews

Bryan and Barbara Ravenscroft

The Ravenscroft application (see details below) was informally approved by the Commission via telephone in order to meet an October 5th EQIP funding deadline. It was presented again during the September meeting for a formal disposition. Reid moved to approve. Grindstaff seconded. Motion carried without discussion.

Signing Parties:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Vernon Ravenscroft (R/E owner) · Bryan and Barbara Ravenscroft (applicants) 		
Loan Amount:	\$68,880	Term:	10 Years Rate: 4%
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ISCC to be secured by an insured 2nd R/E mortgage on 60 acres · Value of R/E to be established by an acceptable evaluation source · ISCC to secure 1st lien on equipment to be purchased (UCC-1) · Secured equipment to be insured for life of loan 		
Disposition:	Approved as Requested		

Jose and Maria Borba

The Borba's initial application, reviewed in the July 2004 Commission meeting, was tabled due to insufficient collateral offerings. Their loan application has now been updated to reflect the Borba's additional collateral - a 1998 New Holland Tractor with an estimated value (as determined by Mountain View Equipment Company) of \$21,658. Johnston moved to approve. Reid seconded. Motion carried. Details of the Borba loan requests as noted below:

Signing Parties: Jose and Maria Borba					
Loan Amount:	\$20,000	Term:	7 Years	Rate:	4 %
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· ISCC to secure 1st lien on equipment to be purchased (UCC-1) as well as the offered 1998 New Holland tractor· Secured equipment to be insured for life of loan				
Disposition:	Approved as Requested				

Heath and Stephanie Gartner

Taylor presented the Gartner loan request (see table below for details) and noted that funding would facilitate the installation of three pivots on 25 acres of leased land. Evans asked for the determination of property value, which Taylor indicated was part of the applicant's file and could be made available to the Commissioners for review. Johnston noted Gartner's credit rating is good, they have developed a good plan, and the project meets criteria. Based on this determination, Johnston moved to approve and Grindstaff seconded. Evans wanted to see proof of value or equity in property. Taylor indicated she had received a copy of a bank appraisal and could present it shortly. Johnston withdrew his motion and Grindstaff moved to table the request until the appraisal could be evaluated. Evan seconded this motion and it carried without further discussion.

Signing Parties: Heath and Stephanie Gartner		
Loan Amount: \$98,000	Term: 10 Years	Rate: 4 %
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ISCC to be secured by an insured 2nd R/E mortgage on 25 acres · ISCC to be assigned water stock appurtenant to the R/E offered · Value of R/E to be established by an acceptable evaluation source · ISCC to secure 1st lien on equipment to be purchased (UCC-1) · Secured equipment to be insured for life of loan 	
Disposition:	Tabled pending review of R/E appraisal (confirmation of established value)	

RCRDP Grant Application(s) Review

Burleigh delivered an update on Conservation Improvement grants. He reported that even with the current budget, we are still able to get conservation on the ground. He noted that there is still some funding available although it would be best to prioritize the requests.

Jay Schvaneveldt

A request for \$7,365 for the implementation of fencing and watering facility was presented for Jay Schvaneveldt. After a brief review of the grant request, Reid moved to approve and Evans seconded; however, no vote was heard.

Shea asked that the Commissioners assign a priority to each grant application to be approved. Grindstaff returned the request and asked that Burleigh and Shea provide a priority recommendation as they are more familiar with the applicants and their projects.

Dale Piercy

Burleigh delivered a brief explanation of the Piercy request. Evans moved to approve Piercy as the first priority. Grindstaff seconded. Lengthy discussion of priority as determined by both ISCC policy and District assessment was heard. Evans withdrew his motion to make Piercy the first priority and then reinstated it. A quorum was present, and although Johnston and Grindstaff abstained from the vote, the motion did carry by majority.

Malad City

Johnston moved to remove the Malad City application from consideration. Grindstaff seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

Massoth, Darin, and Rowe

Reid moved to approve Massoth. Grindstaff seconded. The motion carried without discussion with Johnston abstaining from the vote.

Idablack/Schvandevelt

Grindstaff moved to approve Idablack as priority 3 and Schvaneveldt as priority 4. Reid seconded the motion and it carried.

Grant Policy Review

Burleigh distributed presented the grant policy for a second review. Reid moved to approve. Evans seconded. Motion carried. Reid and Evans both would like to see the new copies of both the RCRDP Loan Policy and the newly approved Conservation Improvement Grants policy.

Conservation Technical Assistance

Nicolescu and Sims spoke with Jane McClaran, DFM, and Jim Yost, Office of the Governor, regarding the proper method of constructing a new CTA agreement between NRCS, IASCD, and ISCC. Grindstaff moved to approve the new CTA agreement. Evans seconded. Chairman Whittom to sign agreement number 68-004297. Motion carried.

District Funds Report

Shea presented a brief summary of District bank balances, including average annual expenses, summaries of FY 2004, FY 2003 and FY 2002 expenses, and average assets. Shea noted this report is strictly informational, although she would appreciate some direction from the Commission as she determines appropriate amounts for this year's second allocation. Weaver asked about expenses for North and South Bingham. South Bingham does have a plan and is saving to buy land.

Executive Session

Reid moved to enter Executive Session pursuant to Idaho Code § 67-2345 to discuss legal and personnel issues at 11:05 a.m. Johnston seconded. Roll Call Vote: Evans – Aye; Grindstaff – Aye; Johnston – Aye; Reid – Aye and the motion carried. Nicolescu, Sims, Hawley, and Thomasson were asked to remain for executive session. The Commission meeting returned to open meeting at 12:15 p.m. Johnston moved to hold a meeting with the NezPerce Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Board of Directors during the IASCD Conference in November, depending on when the attorneys are available. Grindstaff seconded and the motion carried. The meeting then adjourned for lunch.

OnePlan Update

Newbill delivered an update of the progress being made on OnePlan. A summary of this presentation is noted below:

- Six guidance documents under development
- Forestry issues are being evaluated and may be integrated in future components
- Keith Griswold, NRCS, is leading an evaluation of toolkit interaction - intent is to migrate data from conservation planner into the new NRCS toolkit
- IDFG & IDF&W are interested in using the Conservation Planner for delivery of their local programs.
- The NMP component will soon be used in Iowa, Oregon and Vermont to meet NRCS' 590 standard
- The Range Planner is under development again after a brief delay
- Tony Raza (chief programmer) left the project and new programmers have been brought in to complete the current phases of development

- Currently exploring possible funding for the pest management planner component

DEQ Update

Phil Bandy gave DEQ's update report in lieu of Toni Hardesty, who was unable to attend. Highlights of the report as follows:

- Clean Water Fund, established to provide watershed initiatives, is providing funding for projects being developed and implemented statewide. DEQ currently working towards procuring additional funding
- Dan Steinborn has been named the new EPA nonpoint source coordinator. EPA has done much research pertaining to funding clean water projects – many ideas are available on their website – www.epa.gov
- Toni Hardesty has been named as the new Director of DEQ
- Barry Bernell is the newly appointed Water Quality Director

Evans asked how much funding is available for water quality projects. Bandy noted of the approximately \$40 million available, about 60% is earmarked for water quality. Each year, \$2.8 million is allocated to 319 projects alone. DEQ is currently soliciting project proposals for 319 funding. Typically, 319 funds are awarded as grants and may be used to provide matching funds for EQIP projects.

Ground Water/Surface Water Report

Gary Bahr announced the upcoming 'Agriculture and Water Quality in the Pacific NW' conference and associated workshops. The planning committee is working to obtain Chief Knight (NRCS) as the keynote speaker.

Surface water Updates:

- A new employee (IASCD contract) has been hired in Pocatello – Amy Jenkins is replacing Chris Fischer, who accepted a position with Pocatello NRCS.
- Bahr's team is working to add surface water evaluation data to TMDL implementation plans.
- Staff members are beginning to conduct on-site BMP evaluations
- Lance Holloway, ISDA, has been actively working with Districts in the development of 319 grant projects
- Gooding SCD recently began funding a new 319 project, which is important since they are part of a high-priority nitrate area
- Yellowstone and Lewis Districts also have current 319 projects

Ground Water Updates:

- Draft Pest Management Plan rules for ground water protection are currently being reviewed in public forums for comment

- Agriculture and Water Quality in the Pacific NW Conference scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, October 19th and 20th. Corresponding workshops will be held at ISDA on Monday the 18th

Ag Pavilion Report

Ambrose delivered a report of this year's Simplot Ag Pavilion. She distributed a summary of attendance and participation (compiled by Rick Waitley) as well as copies of the new environmental Farm Fact posters that were incorporated into the new Pavilion. Ambrose invited everyone to take a moment to look at the displays on exhibit in the lobby of the ISDA conference area - those same displays were used in both the Western and Eastern Idaho State Fairs. The Partnership's displays ("Conservation Corner") were very well received. Many Conservation Districts have requested use of the displays in events around the state already. There was some discussion of who may borrow displays and for how long. It was suggested a policy be drafted to address these and similar issues.

Agency Reports

IDEA Report

No report was available.

NRCS Report

Sims distributed copies of the NRCS report and spoke briefly on a few other items. Sims introduced Terry Cosby, Deputy State Conservationist. He also noted Cosby would be attending Division meetings and folks in the field would have the opportunity to meet him there. Sims reported the end of their fiscal year was fast approaching (September 30) and noted seven soil surveys were completed this year. A new digitized format will be utilized for the soil surveys – thus reducing the number of printed copies significantly.

Evans asked about funding available through the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and Sims noted \$1,140,000 had been set aside primarily for sage grouse areas such as Lemhi, Caribou and Bear Lake. He also said money is being directed towards conservation easements rather than lease agreements.

Cosby took a moment to share a little bit about himself with everyone – noting 15 years spent as a Conservationist in Iowa as well as 10 years in Missouri.

IASCD Report

Hawley delivered the IASCD report. He emphasized the upcoming IASCD Conference to be held in Moscow this year. There was a brief discussion of Conference items, including awards, resolutions, and agenda. Weaver noted the Saturday of Conference coincides with Homecoming for U of I and nearly every room in Moscow is booked. She suggested everyone make reservations as soon as possible.

Hawley touched briefly on other topics, including upcoming Fall Division meetings, the District Financial Accountability Policy, and a grant writing survey recently taken among district personnel. Hawley also reported on two new employees: Ben Evans, a Water Quality Resource Conservationist in Soda Springs was hired to replace Steve Smith. Smith left the Association to continue his work for the Partnership with the Commission. Another new hire, Amy Jenkins, is a Water Quality Analyst stationed in Pocatello. Amy replaces Chris Fischer who left the Association to accept a position with the Pocatello NRCS. On a related personnel note, Hawley reported the Association is looking to economize health benefits for field staff and will have more information to report soon.

U of I CES Report

No representative was available for the U of I CES report.

ISDA Report

Takasugi addressed the Commission with the ISDA update report. He spoke briefly on a number of current issues facing the Department.

- Ag appropriations decision making is underway
- Crop Residue burning (Rathdrum Prairie burning is finished for now) has been less of an issue this year, although this may be directly related to a relatively inconsequential forest-fire season.
- There have been approximately 90% fewer smoke/field burning complaints this year compared to last
- Water quality issues have been relatively mild this year
- Odor issues are still being researched and negotiated in rule-making sessions
- New technology is being explored for waste management issues and will be served even better served if the energy bill passes
- National meeting at the end of the month – BSE sampling, plant disease, etc
- Conducting ground water protection hearings
- Evans inquired as to the status of the animal ID program Takasugi indicated no plans or funding had been committed to thus far

RCRDP Loan Application(s) Reviews, continued

Taylor provided the Commission with the requested property appraisal for Heath and Stephanie Gartner. Grindstaff moved to bring the Gartner loan back for discussion. Johnston seconded. Grindstaff moved to approve the loan request and Reid seconded. The motion carried without discussion.

Public Information Officer Report

Sodhi reported that Takasugi covered most of her own talking points and she didn't have much else to report. Grindstaff asked what products had been produced for the Commission. Sodhi indicated she had not "done much" for the Commission. She noted she has made contacts with Farm Bureau and they have offered to facilitate filming if

she could provide the body of the program. Whittom asked if she had done any work with the Districts. Johnston noted the Stewart dairy could be a fine example of how ISDA, ISCC and NRCS can work together to facilitate sound, productive projects. Weaver noted Jim Guthrie also has a very high profile project that could also be used.

Ground Water Mitigation Update

Burleigh presented an update on the Snake River Plain ground water mitigation effort. To date, Burleigh reported the Commission has awarded 15 grants totaling \$74,000. Another \$135,000 is available for additional grant funding. He noted some projects are still pending and not all disbursements are complete. Burleigh also indicated that there probably aren't many more projects of this nature for us to service, and if there are, they are likely to be upstream and therefore working with Idaho Department of Water Resources.

Weaver commented that Butte and Bear Lake Counties could benefit from these type of projects and Burleigh agreed that there are certainly needs out there and we should be proactive in addressing those concerns.

Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) Projects

Burleigh addressed the Commission along with Kathie Shea, regarding WQPA projects. Burleigh noted that for the first time in several years, they are not receiving an overwhelming amount of applications. Given the less than enthusiastic response, they are soliciting new projects. Reid remarked that he feels the waning applications are a sign the program is declining due to lack of funding. Burleigh agreed, and went on to note that given the tremendous workload of the technical staff, he is not surprised by the fading interest in new projects. Hawley indicated that there is a shortage of technical service available and this is a large factor. Hawley asked if through the partnership, we couldn't develop an internship program for fresh college graduates. Weaver noted that there are a number of colleges seeking organization for internship opportunities.

Leadership in Agriculture (LIA)

Ambrose reported on a phone inquiry from Foster. In July meeting, the Commission approved a \$1,000 for the sponsorship of a District supervisor (to be named) to attend LIA. As no District supervisor could be found that was able to attend, Foster asked that the Commission consider applying their sponsorship to an Association employee. Rick Waitley asked that Scott Koberg participate in LIA and Foster agreed that Koberg would be an appropriate choice. Johnston moved to approve a transfer of sponsorship to Scott Koberg. Reid seconded and the motion carried.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Evans moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:26 P.M. Johnston seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jenn Ambrose, Administrative Assistant.